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ABSTRACT

A national survey obtained information from students who undertook vocational education and training (VET) during 1998 at a Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institute in Australia. Data came from graduates (students who completed their course and graduated with a qualification from a course) and module completers (students who successfully completed part, but not all, of the training necessary to complete a full qualification). Findings indicated the following: 87.7 percent of TAFE graduates were employed or in further study after their course; 72.8 percent of TAFE graduates were employed after their training; 67.5 percent of TAFE module completers were employed after their training; 61.8 percent of graduates and 61.7 percent of module completers rated the overall quality of their TAFE training as 8 or more on a 10-point scale ranging from "poor" to "excellent"; 47.4 percent of TAFE graduates and 40 percent of TAFE module completers who were unemployed before their training found work after their training; and 23.2 of employed TAFE graduates and 10.6 percent of employed TAFE module completers moved to a higher skilled occupation after their training. Other findings were as follows: graduates were more likely to undertake their training for vocational or job-related reasons than module completers; module completers indicated "employment/gained what I wanted from training" was the main reason for not continuing TAFE training; and "personal reasons" was the next most important largest reason. (YLB)

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statistics 1999

Student Outcomes Survey

in summary

Highlights for 1999 include:

- 87.7% of TAFE graduates were employed or in further study after their course.
- 72.8% of TAFE graduates were employed after their training.
- 67.5% of TAFE module completers were employed after their training (Information has been collected on this group for the first time. They are students who successfully completed part of a course only).
- 61.8% of graduates and 61.7% of module completers rated the overall quality of their TAFE training as eight or more on a 10-point scale ranging from 'poor' to 'excellent'.
- 47.4% of TAFE graduates and 40.0% of TAFE module completers who were unemployed before their training found work after their training.
- 23.2% of employed TAFE graduates and 10.6% of employed TAFE module completers moved to a higher skilled occupation after their training.

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About the survey

The *1999 Student Outcomes Survey: in summary* presents information gained from the national survey of students who undertook vocational education and training during 1998 at a Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institute in Australia. Information is presented about two groups of students: graduates and module completers. Graduates are students who completed their course during 1998 and graduated with a qualification from a course of at least 200 hours or one semester in duration. Module completer information was collected for the first time on students who successfully completed part, but not all, of the training necessary to complete a full qualification (at least one module) and had left the TAFE system at the time of completing the survey. A questionnaire was sent to all graduates with a national response rate of 55.8%. A similar questionnaire was also sent to a stratified, randomly selected sample of module completers resulting in a national response rate of 52.4%.

While comparisons can be made between these two groups of TAFE students there are some differences between the groups that should be noted. Module completers generally undertake less training with a median length of training of five months compared to 10 months for graduates. Graduates (56.2%) are more likely to be female than module completers (47.9%) and on average graduates (29 years) are younger than module completers (34 years). All of these factors are likely to have an impact on employment related outcomes.

Comparisons have been made throughout this publication where they are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. Any figures which have a relative standard error greater than 25% have been marked with an * as estimates of this magnitude are not reliable for most practical purposes. Refer to the technical notes at the end of the publication for more information on the precision of survey estimates.

A non-response analysis, using a telephone methodology, was undertaken on a sample of non-respondents to examine whether any non-response bias exists. The analysis involved comparing mail respondents with a representative sample of non-respondents interviewed by telephone. The non-respondents to the mail questionnaire are more likely to:

- Male
- Employed after their training
- Have achieved their main reason for doing the training
- Rate each aspect of the training as 'good'.

The analysis found that while an element of bias does exist it is not large in an absolute sense. For example the proportion employed after training for graduates would increase from 72.8% to 75.8%, while the proportion employed after training for module completers would increase from 67.5% to 69.5%.

What does TAFE offer students?

- **Career advancement.** TAFE training increase chances of finding work, advancing careers and increasing salary levels for both graduates and module completers, although graduates are more likely to achieve these outcomes than module completers.
- **A chance to move occupations.** TAFE offers graduates and module completers the chance of moving to higher skilled occupations after training. Graduates are again more likely to move to higher skilled occupations than module completers.
- **Relevant training.** For those already in the workforce TAFE provides relevant training and meets employed students expectations. Employed graduates thought their training was more relevant to their employment than module completers.
- **Student diversity.** Close to two thirds of all graduates and module completers already had a job before commencing their training, many have already completed some other post-school study and under one quarter of graduates and about one in 10 module completers are coming to TAFE within 12 months of leaving school.
- **High quality training.** Graduates and module completers are generally happy with the overall quality and provision of their training with graduates generally more satisfied than module completers.
- **Reasons for attending TAFE.** The majority of graduates and module completers undertake training for vocational or job related reasons. Graduates are more likely to use their training as a way of entering the workforce while module completers are more likely to undertake training to upgrade their skills. Module completers are also more likely to undertake training for non-vocational reasons.

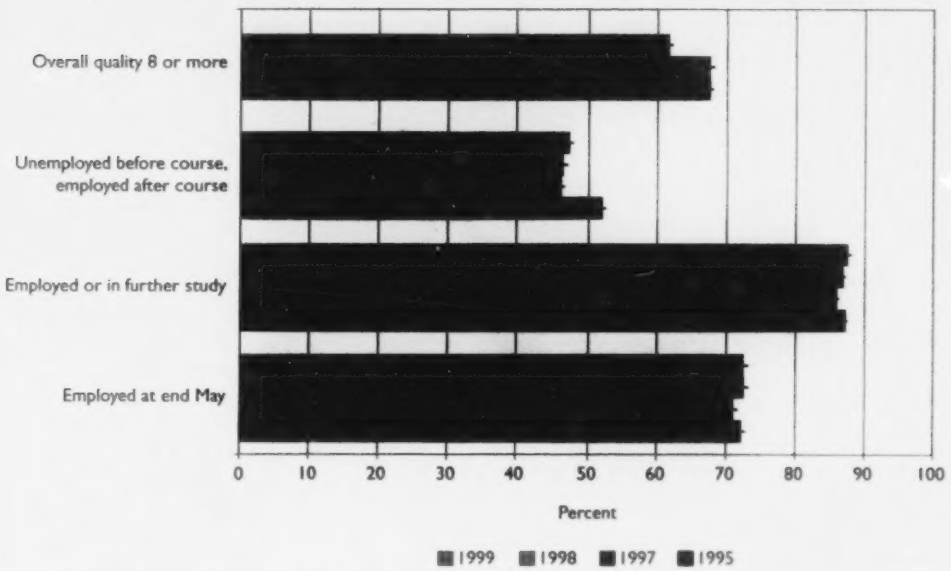
Time series

Most of the key outcomes measures that are collected from the surveys have remained fairly stable since the information was first collected in 1995 (Figure 1). This is particularly so of the employment indicators.

The proportion of persons employed or in further study was 87.3% in 1995. The proportion fell slightly in 1997 to 86.2% and increased over the next two surveys to 87.7% in 1999. The employment rate of graduates at the end of May has followed a very similar pattern. In 1995 it was 72.5%, it fell slightly in 1997 to 71.0% and has remained unchanged for the last two surveys at 72.8%.

Those graduates that were unemployed before their training and got a job afterwards has shown more movement. In the 1995 survey, 52.1% of persons unemployed before their training got a job. The proportion slipped to 46.2% in 1997 before improving slightly to 47.4% in 1999.

Figure 1: Per cent of graduates by four key outcomes measures, 1995, 1997, 1998 and 1999



Note: The figure above, and this section in general, relate only to graduates. Module completer information was collected for the first time in the 1999 survey, therefore no time series information is available for this group. Standard error bars have been included on the figures throughout this publication and provide an indication of the error associated with the estimate that has been produced. More information on standard errors is provided in the technical notes section at the back of the publication.

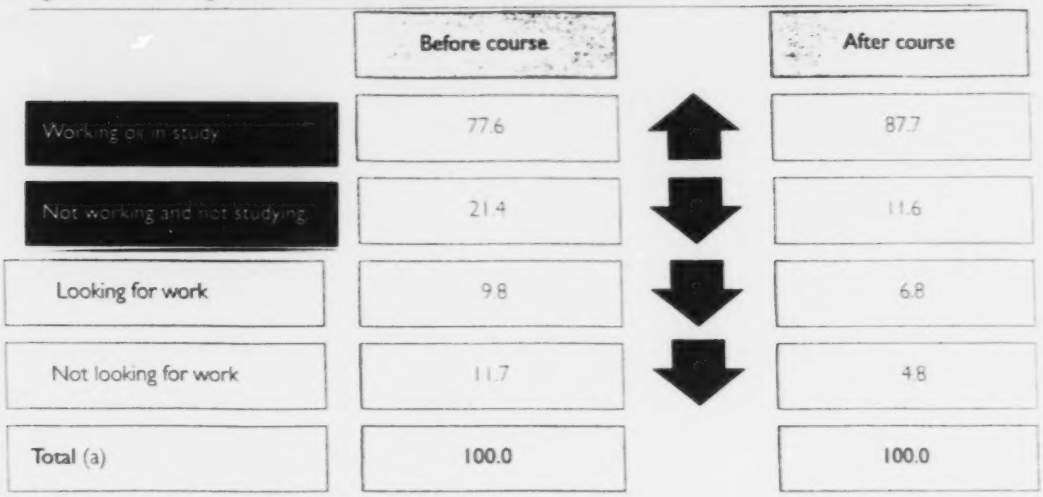
The mean satisfaction level with the overall quality of the graduate's course has generally hovered around the eight out of 10 mark where one is considered 'poor' and 10 'excellent'. In 1997 it was 8.0 and in 1999 it was 7.7.

Employment or further study

After completing their course TAFE graduates often go on to do further study, many while working, others while looking for work and some as an alternative to working or seeking work. Module completers are excluded from this analysis as, by definition, a module completer must have left the TAFE system and not be in further study at the time they received the survey form.

Overall, in 1999 87.7% of graduates were working or in further study after their course compared to 77.6% before beginning their course. Figure 2 compares the work and study patterns of graduates before and after their course and categorises graduate activity into two broad groups: those in work or study, and those not working and not studying.

Figure 2: Per cent of graduates in work or study



Note: The above figure refers to graduates only

a) Components may not add to total due to non-response to some survey questions or rounding.

After completing their current study, further study was undertaken by 40.3% of graduates. The major reasons for undertaking further study are work related, 'to get a job or own business' 28.7%, 'to get a better job or promotion' 19.1% and 'to get extra skills for my present job' 14.8%.

Employment status after training

Many students combine work and study and come to TAFE with current work experience and continue this work and study pattern during their training and even after completing their training. This pattern of work and study is slightly different for graduates and module completers. Graduates are more likely to be employed (72.8%) in comparison with module completers (67.5%). Graduates are also more likely to be employed in full-time and part-time work. The percentage of unemployed graduates and module completers is the same at 13.0%, while module completers (16.7%) are more likely than graduates (13.5%) to be not in the labour force.

For graduates, about two thirds (64.6%) were employed in the six months prior to commencing their course, 63.6% worked during their course and 72.8% were working at 28 May 1999 (i.e. about 6 months after course completion). This is a similar pattern of employment before, during and after that was reported in the 1998 survey. For module completers, 64.6% were employed before their training, 61.5% during their training and 67.5% were working after their training.

For nearly one quarter of employed graduates (23.9%), their job at 28 May 1999 was their first full-time job, about the same proportion as for the 1998 survey (24.5%). The survey indicated that 59.3% of employed graduates were working with the same employer as they had during their final semester of study. The average weekly earnings for first full-time graduate job holders was $462, a slight decrease ($8) since the May 1998 survey. By comparison, 19.3% of module completers were in their first full-time job at 28 May and 67.4% were working with the same employer as they had during their training. For module completers in their first full-time job the average weekly earnings was $486.

Table 1 provides the labour force status at 28 May 1999 for students and shows:

- Graduates (72.8%) are more likely to be employed than module completers (67.5%).
- Male students are more likely to be employed full-time than female students.
- Female students are more likely to be employed part-time than male students.
- Female graduates are more likely to be unemployed (14.5%) compared with male graduates (11.2%).
- Module completers (16.7%) are more likely to be not in the labour force compared with graduates (13.5%).

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Table 1: Per cent of graduates and module completers by labour force status and sex at 28 May 1999

	Graduates			Module completers		
Labour force status	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Employed*	78.6	68.2	72.8	72.0	63.0	67.5
Full-time	56.5	30.9	42.1	53.4	26.1	40.2
Part-time	9.4	24.7	18.0	7.4	25.4	16.0
Unemployed:	11.2	14.5	13.0	13.2	12.8	13.0
Seeking full-time work	8.7	8.3	8.5	10.9	7.7	9.3
Seeking part-time work	2.5	6.2	4.6	2.3	5.1	3.7
Not in the labour force	9.5	16.6	13.5	11.5	22.2	16.7
Total (includes 'not stated')	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

* Employed includes 'not stated' for full-time and part-time

The employment pathways for students from before commencing their training to after their training are illustrated in figure 3 below. It shows the change in employment status from before commencing training to after training for students is quite different. Graduates improve their employment prospects to a greater extent than do module completers. The net increase in employment after training for graduates is 8.2 percentage points while for module completers it is 2.9 percentage points. Much of this increase is due to graduates moving from *not looking for work* to employment. Module completers who were originally *not looking for work* have not moved to employment at the same rate as graduates. The improvement in the unemployment rate for both graduates and module completers is about the same.

Figure 3: Per cent of graduates and module completers by labour force participation before and after training

* Total working includes not stated for full-time and part-time

Note: In the figure above a relatively high proportion of graduates and module completers who were employed after their training did not report whether they worked either full or part-time. Consequently, the proportion of students employed either full or part-time will be understated after their training. Although figure 3 indicates that module completers working full time has remained virtually unchanged after their training it is likely that they would have increased given the not stated issue.

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Movement to higher skilled occupations[1]

Vocational education and training provides the opportunity for employed students to move occupations, change jobs and advance in their job after completing their training. Graduates are more likely to move to a higher skilled occupation than module completers. Overall 23.2% of graduates and 10.6% of module completers employed both before and after their training moved to a higher skilled occupation after their training. Students with jobs in the lowest skilled occupations before commencing their training are more likely to move to higher skilled occupations after their training.

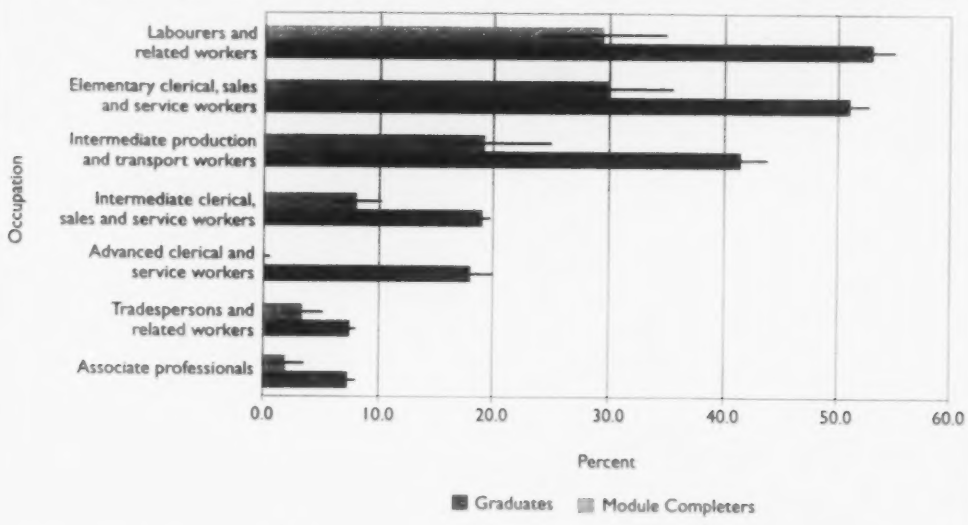
About half the graduates employed as *labourers and related workers* (53.1%), *and elementary clerical, sales and service workers* (51.1%) before training moved to higher skilled occupations after training (Figure 4). The pattern was similar for module completers, although the magnitude of the movement was much less, with 29.5% and 30.0% moving respectively from the same lower skill level occupations before training to higher skill level occupations after training.

Major areas of movement occurred in the following occupation categories:

- **Labourers and related workers.** Where 26.9% of employed graduates moved into *the tradespersons and related workers* category and a further 10.2% moved into the *intermediate clerical, sales and service workers* category. Module completers for this occupation category moved to the *tradespersons and related workers* category (12.0%) and *intermediate production and transport workers* category (6.9%) after their training.
- **Elementary clerical, sales and service workers.** 12.6% of employed module completers moved into the *intermediate clerical, sales and service workers* category, while most graduates also moved to this same category (23.0%).
- **Intermediate production and transport workers category.** Where 22.0% of employed graduates moved into the *tradespersons and related workers* category.
- **Intermediate clerical, sales and service workers category.** Where 6.6% of employed graduates moved into the *associate professional's* category and a further 5.5% into the *professional's* category.

Figure 4 shows the extent of occupation movement to higher skilled occupations after training, with the broad occupation groups ranked from lowest skill levels (*labourers and related workers*) to the highest skill levels (*associate professionals*).

Figure 4: Percentage movement to higher skilled occupations of employed graduates and module completers



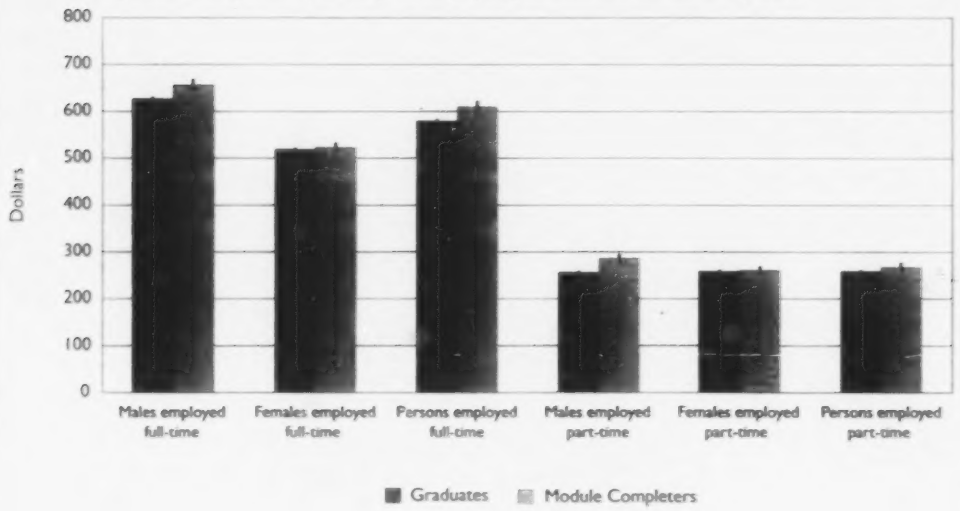
Note: The *professionals* and *managers* categories have been excluded from Figure 4 as the skills level for both are very similar.

For graduates, *professionals* showed the least occupational movement with 87.0% remaining in the same occupation while for module completers, *managers and administrators* showed the least occupational movement with 95.4% remaining in the same occupation.

Average weekly earnings

The average weekly earnings of graduates and module completers varied slightly by full-time and part-time and sex (Figure 5). Module completers employed both full-time ($610) and part-time ($268) had slightly higher average weekly earnings compared with graduates ($579 for full-time and $258 for part-time). Female graduates ($518) and module completers ($523) working full-time earned less than their male counterparts ($626 for graduates and $656 for module completers). However, female graduates working part-time ($258) earned about the same as male graduates working part time ($256).

Figure 5: Average weekly earnings of employed graduates and module completers



Other findings related to student employment outcomes

- Both graduates and module completers who were not employed at the time of completing their training generally took about the same time to find a job. 25.3% of graduates found employment within three months and 20.9% took between three and six months after training. For module completers, 21.9% found employment within three months and 14.8% took between three and six months.
- About the same proportion of employed graduates (69.9%) and module completers (70.2%) worked in the private sector.
- Employed module completers (47.9%) are more likely than graduates (43.7%) to work for a large employer (100 or more employees).
- Male graduates in their first full-time job earned more ($497) on average than their female counterparts ($413). Similarly, male module completers ($522) also earned more than females ($421).
- For graduates, the occupations with the highest weekly earnings for first full-time job holders were *managers and administrators* ($695) and *professionals* ($640).
- For graduates, the industries with the highest salaries for first full-time job holders were *mining* ($733), *communication* ($634) and *electricity, gas and water supply* ($634).

Australia

In 1998 there were approximately 1.54 million clients (students) undertaking training in publicly funded VET programs, representing an increase of 5.2% since 1997. The TAFE population was 1.15 million. The survey identified just over 113,300 TAFE graduates with a qualification. Module completers for 1998 are estimated to be about 246,000.

Note: Caution should be exercised when comparing state/territory information as each jurisdiction has different economic, demographic and social profiles. These factors are likely to have an impact on a range of employment and satisfaction related outcomes.

Australia	Graduates	Module completers [a]
Respondents to survey	63,198	4,152
Female respondents (% of all respondents)	56.2%	47.9%
15-24 age group (% of all respondents)	38.7%	29.5%
Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander (% of all respondents)	1.8%	2.5%
Non-English Speaking Background [b] (% of all respondents)	30.9%	24.8%
Born in overseas country (% of all respondents)	23.6%	19.3%
Employed at end May	72.8%	67.5%
Employed in first full-time job (% of employed)	23.9%	19.3%
Believed training relevant to job (% of employed)	70.1%	56.9%
Occupation most employed (% of employed)		
- males Tradespersons and related workers	36.8%	28.1%
- females Intermediate clerical, sales and services workers	39.7%	33.3%
- persons Intermediate clerical, sales and services workers	25.2%	19.5%
Industry most employed (% of employed)		
- males Manufacturing	17.7%	18.4%
- females Health and community services	23.5%	15.4%
- persons Health and community services	14.1%	M 13.1%
First full-time job (average weekly earnings)	$462	$486
Enrolled in further study	40.3%	N/A
Overall quality rating of training 'good' (8 or more out of 10)	61.8%	61.7%

Notes: [a] See technical notes section at the back of the publication for application of confidence levels for graduates and module completers.
[b] Non-English Speaking Background: student speaks a language other than English at home or one or both parents speak a language other than English as their first language.
M – Manufacturing was the industry where most were employed for module completers.

Northern Territory	Graduates	Module completers [a]
Respondents to survey	313	345
Female respondents (% of respondents)	57.5%	49.3%
Age 15-24 age group (% of respondents)	35.5%	22.1%
Non-English Speaking Background	35.1%	22.8%
Born in overseas country (% of respondents)	20.1%	15.5%
Employed at end May	76.7%	77.8%
Employed in first full time job (% of employed)	24.2%	13.4%
Enrolled in further study	40.9%	N/A

Western Australia	Graduates	Module completers [a]
Respondents to survey	6,016	485
Female respondents (% of respondents)	54.9%	54.3%
Age 15-24 age group (% of respondents)	49.0%	30.1%
Non-English Speaking Background	24.1%	22.3%
Born in overseas country (% of respondents)	24.3%	25.5%
Employed at end May	71.0%	72.3%
Employed in first full time job (% of employed)	27.6%	18.3%
Enrolled in further study	41.0%	N/A

South Australia	Graduates	Module completers [a]
Respondents to survey	4,673	708
Female respondents (% of respondents)	48.8%	49.9%
Age 15-24 age group (% of respondents)	34.1%	21.6%
Non-English Speaking Background	21.5%	22.4%
Born in overseas country (% of respondents)	17.7%	20.4%
Employed at end May	80.6%	68.2%
Employed in first full time job (% of employed)	23.0%	14.5%
Enrolled in further study	38.0%	N/A

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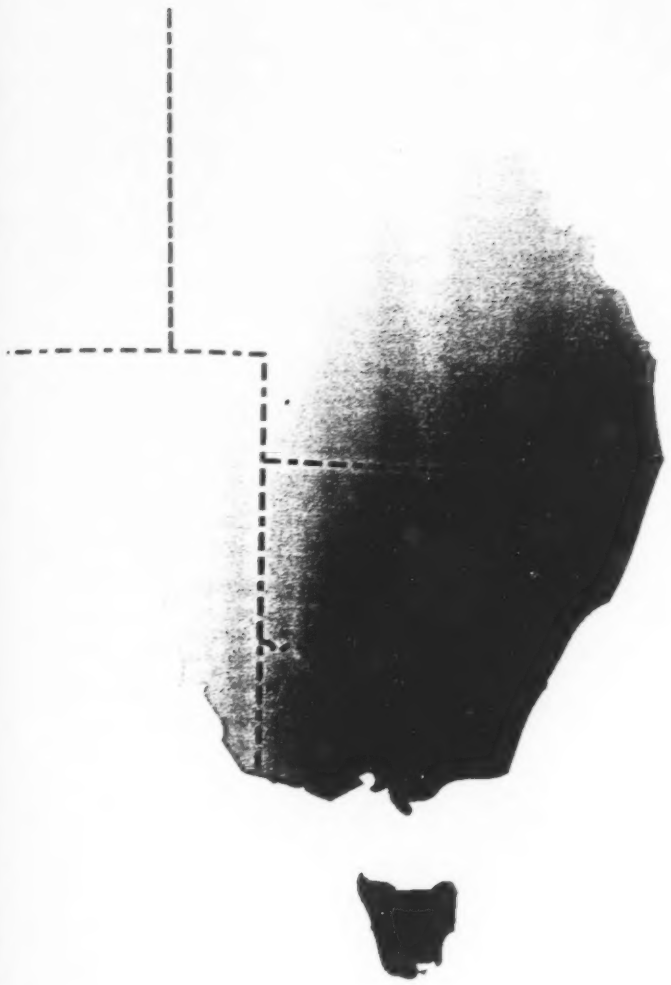
Queensland	Graduates	Module completers[a]
Respondents to survey	7,748	543
Female respondents (% of respondents)	61.0%	50.0%
Age 15-24 age group (% of respondents)	35.6%	32.6%
Non-English Speaking Background	19.1%	18.6%
Born in overseas country (% of respondents)	19.3%	16.8%
Employed at end May	73.3%	67.3%
Employed in first full time job (% of employed)	18.1%	21.9%
Enrolled in further study	41.0%	N/A

New South Wales	Graduates	Module completers[a]
Respondents to survey	29,472	531
Female respondents (% of respondents)	57.6%	50.0%
Age 15-24 age group (% of respondents)	37.4%	34.0%
Non-English Speaking Background	36.9%	27.6%
Born in overseas country (% of respondents)	27.4%	19.2%
Employed at end May	70.8%	63.7%
Employed in first full time job (% of employed)	24.9%	22.1%
Enrolled in further study	42.9%	N/A

Australian Capital Territory	Graduates	Module completers[a]
Respondents to survey	1,176	439
Female respondents (% of respondents)	57.5%	47.7%
Age 15-24 age group (% of respondents)	38.6%	34.3%
Non-English Speaking Background	36.9%	31.2%
Born in overseas country (% of respondents)	26.4%	21.1%
Employed at end May	73.6%	73.5%
Employed in first full time job (% of employed)	22.6%	19.6%
Enrolled in further study	37.2%	N/A



Tasmania	Graduates	Module completers[a]
Respondents to survey	1,343	663
Female respondents (% of respondents)	52.6%	47.2%
Age 15-24 age group (% of respondents)	32.2%	31.0%
Non-English Speaking Background	11.0%	8.9%
Born in overseas country (% of respondents)	10.1%	9.7%
Employed at end May	71.0%	68.2%
Employed in first full time job (% of employed)	20.3%	20.1%
Enrolled in further study	36.0%	N/A

Victoria	Graduates	Module completers[a]
Respondents to survey	12,457	458
Female respondents (% of respondents)	53.5%	40.1%
Age 15-24 age group (% of respondents)	41.2%	24.2%
Non-English Speaking Background	32.1%	29.3%
Born in overseas country (% of respondents)	20.4%	20.3%
Employed at end May	75.0%	70.5%
Employed in first full time job (% of employed)	24.4%	16.5%
Enrolled in further study	34.9%	N/A

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Satisfaction outcomes

Graduates and module completers were asked whether they thought the training helped them achieve the main reason for doing their training, whether or not the training was relevant to their employment at May 1999, and to rate the quality of the training on a number of aspects.

Overall, students reported they were happy with their training. Over three quarters of graduates, 79.4%, and 71.4% of module completers, indicated that their training helped them wholly or partly achieve the main reason for undertaking the training (Table 2).

A list of possible employment related benefits of completing the training was provided in the questionnaire and students employed at 28 May 1999 were asked to indicate which of these benefits they thought they had received as a result of completing their training.

There were distinct differences in benefits for graduates and module completers and male and female students. Table 2 provides a summary of the employment related benefits received by graduates and module completers. The main findings include:

- Graduates overall are more likely to achieve at least one benefit (63.3%) than module completers (41.0%).
- Male graduates (46.2%) are more likely than female graduates (33.9%) to obtain an increase in earnings or a promotion or increased status at work.
- Female graduates (44.7%) are more likely to either change jobs or get a job in comparison with male graduates (38.4%).
- Module completers follow the same pattern as graduates, in that males (22.1%) are more likely than females (12.7%) to obtain an increase in earnings or a promotion or increased status at work.
- Graduates were also more likely than module completers to obtain an increase in earnings or a promotion or increased status at work.

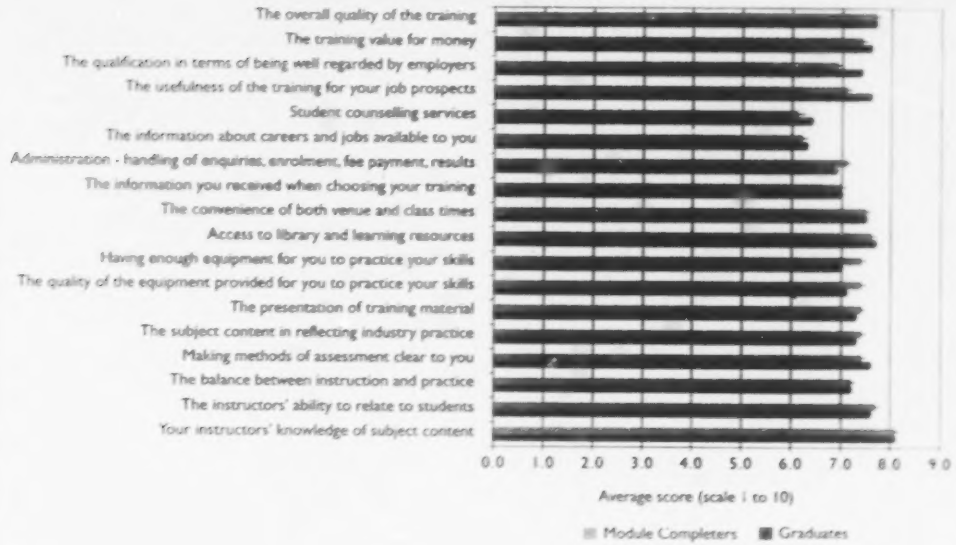
Table 2: Per cent of graduates and module completers by employment related benefits

	Graduates			Module completers		
Employment related benefits	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
An increase in earnings	27.2	20.4	23.6	10.8	6.4	8.8
A promotion or increase in status at work	18.9	13.5	16.1	11.3	6.4	9.1
A job	24.0	26.2	25.2	12.0	10.8	11.5
A change of job	14.4	18.5	16.5	6.8	7.2	7.0

Overall graduates reported higher levels of relevance of their training to employment compared with module completers. 47.4% of graduates employed at 28 May 1999 regarded their course to be highly relevant to their employment while a further 22.7% thought it to be of some relevance. Employed module completers reported lower levels of relevance of their training to employment, with 26.9% stating it to be highly relevant and 30.0% thought it to be of some relevance.

Overall students were satisfied with their training, with both graduates and module completers rating the overall quality of their training as 7.7 out of 10. A number of aspects of the training were listed in the questionnaire and students were asked to rate each of these on a scale from one to 10, where one or two was 'poor' and nine or 10 was 'excellent' (Figure 6). The overall quality item resulted in a mean score of 7.7, with 61.8% of graduates and 61.7% of module completers rating overall quality eight or above. Both sets of students rated their instructors' knowledge of course content the highest, with a mean score of 8.1. This aspect was also ranked by graduates and module completers as the most important aspect of service (28.8% and 29.2% respectively). The lowest rating item for module completers was student counselling services (6.1) while for graduates it was the availability of information about careers and jobs (6.3).

Figure 6: Average rating of training aspects by graduates and module completers


The overall quality of the training
The training value for money
The qualification in terms of being well regarded by employers
The usefulness of the training for your job prospects
Student counselling services
The information about careers and jobs available to you
Administration - handling of enquiries, enrolment, fee payment, results
The information you received when choosing your training
The convenience of both venue and class times
Access to library and learning resources
Having enough equipment for you to practice your skills
The quality of the equipment provided for you to practice your skills
The presentation of training material
The subject content in reflecting industry practice
Making methods of assessment clear to you
The balance between instruction and practice
The instructors' ability to relate to students
Your instructors' knowledge of subject content
0.0 1.0 2.0 3.0 4.0 5.0 6.0 7.0 8.0 9.0
Average score (scale 1 to 10)
Module Completers
Graduates

Main reason for undertaking training

Graduates (79.0%) indicated they were more likely to undertake their training for vocational or job related reasons than module completers (66.5%), when asked to indicate their main reasons for undertaking the training. There are even further differences between the two groups when more detailed reasons for training are examined. Graduates appear to be more likely to undertake training as a way of entering the labour market, while module completers are more likely to undertake training to upgrade their skills. Table 3 shows that graduates were more likely to undertake their training *to get a job or own business* than module completers (27.1% compared to 18.6%), whereas module completers were more likely to indicate *to get extra skills for my job* than graduates (20.3% compared to 14.0%). This is not surprising, given that graduates (21.1%) are almost twice as likely to begin training as recent school leavers than module completers (10.9%).

Module completers were more likely to undertake training for non vocational reasons (31.1%) compared with graduates (20.3%).

Table 3: Per cent of graduates and module completers by main reason for undertaking training

Main reason for undertaking training	Graduates	Module completers
Vocational or work related reasons	**79.0**	**66.5**
To get a job (or own business)	27.1	18.6
To try for a different career	13.3	9.0
To get a better job or promotion	12.4	6.8
It was a requirement of my job	12.2	11.9
To get extra skills for my job	14.0	20.3
Non vocational reasons	**20.3**	**31.1**
Total (includes 'not stated')	**100.0**	**100.0**

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Reasons for not continuing to study (module completers only)

As previously discussed, the definition of a module completer used in the survey was that the student could not be a graduate and must have successfully completed at least one module and left the TAFE system. All in-scope module completers were asked what their reasons were for not continuing or undertaking more TAFE training in 1999.

Module completers were initially allowed to nominate multiple responses. The most common reasons given were employment or training related:

- About one in four respondents indicating *I had gained what I wanted from the training I had completed* (24.3%).
- 15.9% indicated they *changed jobs or started a new job*.
- 15.7% stated that they *got the skills I needed for my job*.

Personal reasons were also important with:

- 13.8% indicating *there were too many pressures on my time*.
- 9.7% indicated *family reasons prevented me from continuing*.

Respondents were also asked to indicate their **main** reason for not continuing or undertaking more TAFE training in 1999. Just over one in three respondents (36.0%) indicated *employment/gained what I wanted* from training reasons, with 13.4% indicating they had *gained what they wanted from the training* (Table 4). *Personal reasons* (24.3%) was the next largest reason given by module completers for not undertaking more TAFE training. What these results suggest is that six out of 10 (60.3%) respondents are giving external reasons or reasons that are beyond the control of the TAFE system. A further 16.8% indicated issues relating to training as the main reason for not continuing or undertaking more TAFE training in 1999.

Table 4: Per cent of module completers by main reason for not undertaking more TAFE training

Employment/gained what I wanted from training reasons	**36.0**
I had gained what I wanted from the training	13.4
Changed jobs or started a new job	9.0
Training related reasons	**16.8**
The training no longer related to my plans	3.8
The training timetable was not flexible enough for me to attend class times	3.6
The training was not what I expected	3.1
Personal reasons	**24.3**
Family reasons prevented me from continuing	5.0
Too many pressures on my time	6.5
Other reasons	**7.8**
Not stated	**15.1**
Total	**100.0**

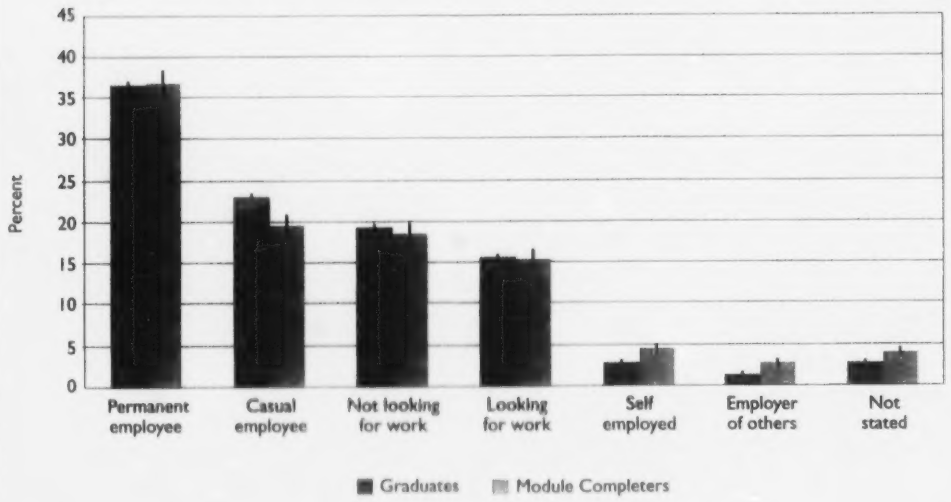
Education and work before undertaking training

Students were asked about their education and employment experiences before commencing their TAFE training. The survey revealed that TAFE is not just for school leavers or others seeking a first qualification, it also caters for people with prior qualifications wanting to upgrade skills through further study. Over half of both graduates (57.2%) and module completers (55.2%) had a post-school qualification.

Employment participation before commencing their training for graduates and module completers is about the same. For both graduates and module completers almost two thirds (64.6%) worked either full-time or part-time before commencing their training.

Figure 7 indicates the employment status of students before undertaking their training and shows that graduates are more likely to be employed on a casual basis compared with module completers (22.8% and 19.4% respectively). However, module completers (4.2%) are more likely to be self employed than graduates (2.6%).

Figure 7: Per cent of graduates and module completers by employment status before undertaking training



The survey also revealed:

- Module completers (78.4%) are more likely to have not studied during the six months before commencing their training compared with graduates (66.9%).
- More module completers (7.9%) commenced their training while still at school than graduates (5.4%).
- Graduates had a higher level of schooling compared with module completers with 54.4% of graduates and 39.2% of module completers having completed year 12 or equivalent.
- About the same proportion of graduates (8.6%) and module completers (9.6%) had a bachelor degree or higher qualification before commencing their training.
- 36.6% of graduates were working full-time before commencing their course and 26.8% part-time. For module completers, 40.4% worked full-time and 23.1% worked part-time.
- 24.0% of graduates employed before their course were in the *intermediate clerical, sales and services workers* occupation category followed by the *tradespersons and related workers* category (15.0%). Module completers worked as *intermediate clerical, sales and service workers* (18.6%) and *tradespersons and related workers* (16.6%).

About the training

Graduates were more likely to be undertaking *business, administration, economics or health and community services* programs compared with module completers. On the other hand, module completers were more likely to be undertaking *VET multifield* (this includes basic numeracy, literacy, English as a second language and general skills development type training) or *science* compared to graduates.

About two thirds of graduates (65.2%) undertook programs in four fields of study (Table 5) – *business, administration, economics* (27.0%), *engineering and surveying* (13.9%), *health and community services* (12.8%) and *services, hospitality, transportation* (11.6%). For module completers, just over two thirds also undertook programs in four fields of study, and apart from module completers substituting *VET multifield education* for *health and community services* the fields were the same as graduates. The order of the four fields for module completers were somewhat different to graduates, with the most popular field being *VET multifield* (23.3%), *business, administration, economics* (19.6%), *engineering, surveying* (15.8%) *and services, hospitality, transportation* (11.1%).

Table 5: Per cent of graduates and module completers by field of study

Field of study	Graduates	Module completers
Land & marine resources, animal husbandry	4.2	5.3
Architecture, building	6.0	4.5
Arts, humanities, social sciences	6.3	4.4
Business, administration, economics	27.0	19.6
Law, legal studies	0.5	1.1
Education	3.2	1.8
Engineering, surveying	13.9	15.8
Health, community services	12.8	5.2
Science	6.0	7.5
Veterinary science, animal care	0.5	0.3*
Services, hospitality, transportation	11.6	11.1
VET multifield education	8.1	23.3
Total (includes 'not stated')	100.0	100.0

Industry of employment

Employment opportunities for students are better in some industries than others. Table 6 illustrates these differences by comparing the employment of students across the 17 major industry groups with the employment pattern for the total Australian workforce.

Graduates are over-represented in the *health and community services* and *accommodation, cafes and restaurant*, industries, while they are under represented, in the main, in the *agriculture, forestry and fishing, the wholesale trade*, and the *transport and storage* industries. Module completers are under represented in the *retail trade, wholesale trade* and *transport, storage industries*.

Table 6: Per cent of graduates and module completers by industry of employment at May 1999[2]

Industry	Graduates	Module completers	All employed persons[3]
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	2.4	5.5	5.0
Mining	0.8	1.1	0.7
Manufacturing	11.5	13.1	12.2
Electricity, gas, water supply	0.9	1.2	0.8
Construction	7.3	6.8	7.4
Wholesale trade	2.8	3.8	5.9
Retail trade	12.4	11.8	15.2
Accommodation, cafes, restaurants	6.1	4.8	4.8
Transport, storage	2.6	3.1	4.8
Communications	1.2	1.6	1.8
Finance, insurance	2.7	2.3	3.5
Property, business services	9.1	9.0	10.9
Government administration, defence	3.6	3.9	4.1
Education	6.5	6.8	7.2
Health, community services	14.1	8.7	9.3
Cultural, recreational services	2.4	2.1	2.5
Personal, other services	3.8	4.0	3.8
Total (includes 'not stated')	100.0	100.0	100.0

Student profile

The following table highlights some of the differences between graduates and module completers.

- **Age.** Graduates (29 years) on average are younger than module completers (34 years). There is a higher proportion of graduates aged under 25 years (38.7% compared to 29.5%) and a lower proportion aged 40 years and over (25.6% compared to 34.1%) than module completers.
- **Sex.** Graduates are more likely to be female (56.2%) compared with module completers (47.9%).
- **Regionality.** Graduates (61.5%) are more likely to have lived in a capital city than module completers (50.6%).
- **Disability.** Module completers (8.1%) are more likely to report they have a disability than graduates (4.3%)

Table 7: Per cent of graduates and module completers by general characteristics

General characteristics	Graduates	Module completers	Australia[3]
Females	56.2	47.9	50.2
Median age	29 years	34 years	34 years
15-24 years of age	38.7	29.5	14.3
Aged 40 and over	25.6	34.1	41.5
Indigenous Australians (ATSI)	1.8	2.5	2.1
Non English Speaking Background	30.9	24.8	N/A
Reported disability	4.3	8.1	19.3
Capital city as home address	61.5	50.6	63.8

Technical notes

Generally the estimates provided throughout this publication have been at the national level and consequently the standard errors associated with these estimates are relatively low. However, some state/territory information has been presented, along with comparisons of graduates and module completers. Readers should therefore be aware that the most reliable results are for graduates at the national level, due primarily to the total number of responses received. The reliability of the estimates decrease with smaller sample sizes and vary with the size of the estimated proportions.

For example twice the standard error of employed graduates (sample size of 63,198) is 0.4 percentage points, compared with twice the standard error for employed module completers (sample size of 4,152) of 1.5 percentage points. For the states and territories twice the standard error of employed graduates in Queensland (sample size of 7,748) is 1.0 percentage point, compared with twice the standard error for employed module completers in Queensland (sample size of 543) of 4.0 percentage points. Twice the standard error is used as a measure of reliability of the estimates at the 95% confidence level.

To aid readers in understanding the estimates, the following table provides twice the standard errors associated with these estimates. For example, the estimate of employed graduates after their course is 72.8%, however if we use the table below we notice that the true value of the estimate lies somewhere between 72.4% and 73.2%.

To illustrate how this confidence interval is derived, in the table below, go to the nearest estimated proportion as identified across the top of the table (that is, 70%) and move down this column until you get to the closest sample size on which the proportion is based (65,000), which then gives a significance level of 0.4. Therefore a 95% confidence interval is plus or minus 0.4 percentage points; that is, the true estimate actually lies between 72.4% and 73.2% in 95% of cases.

This table can be used for graduates and module completers.

Estimates of standard errors for survey percentages at the 95% confidence limit.

	Estimated proportion								
Sample size	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%
100	6.0	8.0	9.2	9.8	10.0	9.8	9.2	8.0	6.0
200	4.2	5.7	6.5	6.9	7.1	6.9	6.5	5.7	4.2
300	3.5	4.6	5.3	5.7	5.8	5.7	5.3	4.6	3.5
350	3.2	4.3	4.9	5.2	5.3	5.2	4.9	4.3	3.2
400	3.0	4.0	4.6	4.9	5.0	4.9	4.6	4.0	3.0
450	2.8	3.8	4.3	4.6	4.7	4.6	4.3	3.8	2.8
550	2.6	3.4	3.9	4.2	4.3	4.2	3.9	3.4	2.6
600	2.4	3.3	3.7	4.0	4.1	4.0	3.7	3.3	2.4
700	2.3	3.0	3.5	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.5	3.0	2.3
1,100	1.8	2.4	2.8	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.8	2.4	1.8
1,300	1.7	2.2	2.5	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.5	2.2	1.7
4,000	0.9	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.3	0.9
4,500	0.9	1.2	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.2	0.9
6,000	0.8	1.0	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.0	0.8
8,000	0.7	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.7
12,000	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.5
30,000	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.3
65,000	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.2

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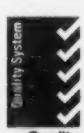

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[1] Employed graduates and module completers described their occupation and the main tasks performed in their job, and on the basis of these data, graduates' and module completers' occupations were classified according to the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO 2nd edition).

[2] Classified on the basis of the business or service carried out by the student's employer according to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classifications (ANZSIC).

[3] ABS publications, Labour Force Australia, catalogue 6203.0, May 1999; Australian Demographic Statistics, catalogue 3101.0, December 1998; Disability, Ageing and Carers Survey, Catalogue 4430.0, 1998.

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